

# Agricultural Report

Connecticut Department of Agriculture  
Dannel P. Malloy, Governor  
Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner



Wednesday, October 24, 2018

## PHOENIX FARM RISES

*Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation*

Phoenix Farm in Cromwell has seen its share of challenges since Christine Whitney's step-grandparents purchased the land in 1957. They operated a dairy and vegetable farm, then known as Lassen Farm, until 1978, when Christine's stepfather took over.

In 1971, a tornado took the roof off the two-story dairy barn, destroying three greenhouses and two silos. After Christine's stepfather passed away in 1997, her mother stopped farming and sold off most of the remaining farm equipment. The farm's future was in doubt.

But Christine's attachment to the land and to her parent's legacy was stronger than the pressures from other forces. Together with her husband John, they purchased the land from Christine's mother in 2010 and decided to permanently preserve it for agriculture. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg)'s Community Farms Preservation Program (CFPP) proved to be a perfect fit. The purchase of development rights (PDR) was deed recorded in the Cromwell land records in December 2015.

The goal of the CFPP is to protect smaller farms that do not meet the criteria of DoAg's flagship Farmland Preservation Program. The program is intended to increase the capacity of municipalities to plan for, and participate in, farmland preservation efforts. The program also requires the protected farms to be in active food production.

To participate, municipalities must meet eligibility requirements, including recognizing agriculture in the town's plan of conservation and development and establishing a source of funds for agricultural land preservation, among others.

Through the partnership between DoAg and Cromwell, the Whitneys received approximately \$3,198 per acre for the development rights to 47.5 acres of prime farmland soils. The town of Cromwell contributed 25 percent of the funds for the PDR, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), contributed 60 percent, and DoAg contributed 15 percent.

The Whitneys reinvested the funds right back into the farm to purchase equipment and make improvements to the farm.

"All the money went back into the farm because Mom had sold off the tractors and farm equipment," said Christine.

While the land's future in agriculture seemed solid at that point, challenges on the farm continued.

In October 2012, Superstorm Sandy blew the cover off their 72-foot high tunnel,

which had been constructed with assistance from USDA's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). With help from neighbors and friends, the Whitneys recovered the tunnel one unseasonably warm weekend in January 2013 only to see it collapse a month later when Connecticut was hit by a blizzard that brought three feet of snow.

Undaunted, Christine and John rebuilt the minimally heated structure again. They use it to get an early start on the growing season in the spring and extend the season for cold-weather crops such as radishes, carrots, parsnips, and a variety of greens. Low tunnels inside the high tunnel further insulate the crops in the ground from the outside air temperatures.

"When it's 19 outside it's 38 inside," said Christine.

Even when the farm stand is closed from mid-October to May, customers can call ahead to get fresh, certified organic produce.

"We do custom orders a few days per week," said Christine.

"You don't even have to get out of your car, you just drive down here and we hand you the bag."

That bag may include lettuce, kale, swiss chard, arugula, spinach, or radishes freshly harvested from the high tunnel. It may also include potatoes or winter squash harvested earlier in the season and stored in the root cellar located beneath the farm stand.

The farm stand, which operates spring, summer, and fall, was added to the farm with support from a \$39,609 DoAg Farm Reinvestment Grant in 2016. The total project cost was \$94,141—about 18 percent more than expected—with some modifications to the original design necessary because of unanticipated conflicts with easements and zoning regulations.

In order to accommodate the utility easement and not impact the farmland soils protected by the PDR, the footprint of the building was reduced and moved to a different location. The smaller building meant less area to sort, store, and showcase produce and farm products, but allowed for the addition of a basement, which makes an ideal storage space for root crops.

Future plans include building a larger chicken coop, a separate egg processing area, and a commercial kitchen to increase production of their award winning pickles and other value added products.

"We do pickles—dill, bread-and-butter, and spicy," said John. "We won the blue ribbon at the Durham Fair for all three varieties."



*Christine and John Whitney of Phoenix Farm in front of their farm stand in Cromwell. A portion of the cost associated with construction of the farm stand was provided by a DoAg Farm Reinvestment Grant.*

*(continued on Page 3)*

**NORTHEAST EGGS/USDA**

Per doz. Grade A and Grade A white in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.04	1.32
LARGE	.98	1.12
MEDIUM	.63	.76

**NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS**

Per doz. Grade A brown in carton delivered store door. (Range)

XTRA LARGE	1.74	1.89
LARGE	1.65	1.79
MEDIUM	1.16	1.26
SMALL	.82	.92

**LANCASTER, PA LIVESTOCK**

Avg. Dressing. Per cwt. Unless noted

<b>SLAUGHTER STEERS</b>		
Hi Ch/Prime 3-4	108.00	111.00
Choice 2-3	104.00	107.00
<b>SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS</b>		
Choice 1-2	82.00	86.00
Select 1-2	79.00	81.50
<b>SLAUGHTER HEIFERS</b>		
Hi Ch/Prime 3-4	104.00	106.00
Choice 2-3	101.00	102.00
<b>CALVES - Graded bull</b>		
No 1 90-120 lbs	100.00	125.00
<b>SLAUGHTER COWS Avg. Dressing</b>		
breakers 75-80% lean	48.00	52.50
boners 80-85% lean	43.00	49.00
lean 88-90% lean	38.00	44.50
<b>SLAUGHTER LAMBS: Woolled &amp; Shorn</b>		
Markets: Choice and Prime 2-3		
90-110 lbs	185.00	200.00
110-130 lbs	170.00	190.00
130-150 lbs	160.00	177.00
<b>SLAUGHTER EWES: Good 2-3</b>		
120-160 lbs	70.00	95.00
160-200 lbs	65.00	85.00
200-300 lbs	60.00	95.00
<b>SLAUGHTER KIDS: Sel 1</b>		
20-40 lbs	130.00	135.00
40-60 lbs	145.00	170.00
60-80 lbs	170.00	200.00
80-100 lbs	205.00	215.00
<b>SLAUGHTER NANNIES/DOES: Sel 1</b>		
80-130 lbs	165.00	215.00
130-180 lbs	235.00	260.00
<b>SLAUGHTER BUCKS/BILLIES: Sel 1</b>		
100-150 lbs	220.00	260.00
150-250 lbs	300.00	370.00

**NEW HOLLAND, PA. HOG AUCTION**

Per cwt.

<b>SLAUGHTER HOGS</b>		
52-56	200-300 lbs	54.00 59.00
	300-350 lbs	50.00 56.00
48-52	200-300 lbs	42.00 53.00
	300-350 lbs	39.00 48.00
	350-400 lbs	37.00 46.00
<b>Sows, US 1-3</b>		
	400-500 lbs	28.00 36.00
	500-625 lbs	31.00 36.00
<b>Boars</b>		
	425-625 lbs	5.00 12.00

**NEW HOLLAND, PA HAY REPORT**

Price per ton, small squares. Oct. 19, 2018.

<b>ALFALFA/GRASS</b>		
	PREMIUM	350.00 405.00
	GOOD	250.00 350.00
<b>GRASS HAYS</b>		
	PREMIUM	320.00 450.00
	GOOD	235.00 295.00
	FAIR	155.00 180.00
<b>STRAW</b>		
		200.00 255.00

**WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES**

Boston Terminal and Wholesale Grower Prices CONNECTICUT AND NEW ENGLAND GROWN

	LOW	HIGH
ALFALFA SPROUTS, 5 LBS	14.00	15.00
APPLE, CRTLND, 80, CRT, XFCY	30.00	31.00
APPLE, CRTLND, 88, CRT, XFCY	30.00	31.00
APPLE, GALA, LOOSE, NG	22.00	22.00
APPLE, HONYCRISP, BU, NG	45.00	45.00
APPLE, MAC, 80, CRT, XFCY	31.00	32.00
APPLE, MAC, 88, CRT, XFCY	31.00	32.00
APPLE, MAC, 100, CRT, XFCY	26.00	26.00
APPLE, MAC, 125, CRT	17.00	18.00
APPLE, MAC, 138, CRT	17.00	18.00
APPLE, MACOUN, 80, CRT, XFCY	38.00	38.00
APPLE, CRISPIN, BU, NG	22.00	22.00
BEAN SPROUTS, 10 LBS	6.00	7.00
BEAN SPROUTS, 12-12 OZ	12.00	15.00
BROCC, CRN CUT, 20 LB LOOSE	22.00	22.00
CAULIFLOWER, WHITE, 9S, CRT	15.00	16.00
CIDER, 4-1 GALLON	19.00	19.00
CIDER, 9-1/2 GALLON	21.00	21.00
CORN, ORN, INDIAN, BNCH, 20-3S	45.00	50.00
CORN, ORN, POP, BNCH, 20-3S	45.00	50.00
CORN, ORN, MINI, BNCH, 20-3S	28.00	32.00
CORNSTALKS, /BUNDLE, 5	5.00	8.00
CRANBERRIES, 24-12 OZ	32.00	33.00
GOURDS, ORNAMENT, 1/2 BU	14.00	16.00
GOURDS, ORN, SHELLACK 1/2 BU	22.00	25.00
PEPPER, BELL, GREEN, 1-1/9, IR	18.00	22.00
PEPPER, BELL, RED, 1-1/9, IR	16.00	18.00
PMPKN, CNDERL, OR, 24"BIN, L	285.00	300.00
PMPKN, FAIRYTL, OR, 24"BIN, L	285.00	300.00
PMPKN, HOWDN, OR, 36"BIN, JBO	180.00	225.00
PMPKN, HOWDN, OR, 36"BIN, XL	175.00	200.00
PMPKN, HOWDN, OR, 36"BIN, L	150.00	200.00
PMPKN, HOWDN, WH, 24"BIN, JBO	285.00	400.00
PMPKN, PIE, OR, 1/2 BU, M	20.00	25.00
PMPKN, PIE, OR, 24"BIN, M	250.00	285.00
PMPKN, PIE, OR, 36"BIN, M	270.00	300.00
PMPKN, BGMACK, OR, 36"BIN, JB	200.00	225.00
PMPKN, BGMACK, OR, 36"BIN, XL	175.00	200.00
PMPKN, BGMACK, OR, 36"BIN, L	175.00	200.00
PMPKN, BGMACK, OR, 36"BIN, M	175.00	200.00
PMPKN, BGMACK, OR, 36"BIN, S	175.00	200.00
PMPKN, HEIRLOOM, 1/2 BU, S	18.00	20.00
PMPKN, MINI, 1/2 BU, S	18.00	20.00
RUTABAGAS, 50 LB, CRT, M	35.00	36.00
SQUASH, ACORN, 1-1/9, M-L	15.00	18.00
SQUASH, ACORN, 1-1/9, L	16.00	20.00
SQUASH, BUTTERCUP, 1-1/9, M-L	15.00	18.00
SQUASH, BUTTERCUP, 1-1/9, L	16.00	20.00
SQUASH, BUTTERNUT, 1-1/9, M-L	15.00	18.00
SQUASH, BUTTERNUT, 1-1/9, L	16.00	20.00
SQUASH, BUTTERNUT, 1-1/9, XL	15.00	18.00
SQUASH, CARNIVAL, 1-1/9, L	20.00	24.00
SQUASH, DELICATA, 1-1/9, L	20.00	24.00
SQUASH, BLUE HUB, 1-1/9, L	20.00	24.00
SQUASH, KABOCHA, 1-1/9, M-L	15.00	18.00
SQUASH, SPAGHETTI, 1-1/9, M-L	16.00	18.00
SQUASH, SPAGHETTI, 1-1/9, L	15.00	18.00
STRAW BALE, STAND, 1 BALE	7.00	8.00
STRAW BALE, MINI, 1 BALE	4.50	5.50
TOMS, GHS, 25LBS, VINERIPE, S-M	15.00	15.00
TOMS, GHS, ONVINE, 11LBS, S-M	15.00	15.00
TOM, GHS, CHRRY, 10 LB CRT, S-M	19.00	19.50
TOM, GHS, CHRRY, 5 LB FLAT, S-M	14.00	15.00
TOM, GHS, CHRRY, 8-10 OZ, S-M	20.00	24.00

**BOSTON MARKET ORGANIC**

Price Range. Per unit.

CABBAGE, 45 LB, CRT, M-L	24.00	24.00
EGGPLANT, WRPPD, 1-1/9, M	24.00	25.00
MESCLIN MIX, CA, 3 LB, CRT	8.00	9.00
SPINACH, BABY, CA, 4 LB, CRT	12.00	13.00

**MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION**

Middlefield, CT - October 22, 2018

	LOW	HIGH
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	20.00	25.00
61-75 lbs.	42.50	45.00
76-90 lbs.	48.00	52.50
91-105 lbs.	57.50	65.00
106 lbs. & up	80.00	175.00
Farm Calves	195.00	205.00
Starter Calves	n/a	n/a
Veal Calves	80.00	130.00
Feeder Heifers	75.50	120.00
Beef Heifers	76.00	88.00
Feeder Steers	70.00	130.00
Beef Steers	73.00	98.00
Feeder Bulls	90.00	135.00
Beef Bulls	62.00	68.00
Replacement Cows	n/a	n/a
Replacement Heifers	n/a	n/a
Boars	n/a	n/a
Sows	n/a	n/a
Butcher Hogs	n/a	n/a
Feeder Pigs each	12.00	25.00
Sheep each	97.50	150.00
Lambs each	47.50	195.00
Goats each	87.50	320.00
Kid Goats each	50.00	240.00
Canners	up to	49.50
Cutters	50.00	53.00
Utility Grade Cows	54.00	57.00
Rabbits each	5.00	42.50
Chickens each	4.00	27.50
Ducks each	2.00	12.00

**BOSTON MARKET CUT FLOWERS**

Wholesale. \$/unit listed.

Long stem unless noted. October 23, 2018.

DAHLIA, NENG, 5/BN	12.50	13.50
SEDUM, XL, NENG /BN	10.00	10.00
SEDUM, L, NENG /BN	6.50	6.50
SOLIDAGO, L, NENG /BN	8.50	8.50
SUNFLWR, NENG, 5/BN	7.50	8.75
SUNFLWR, NENG, EA	1.00	1.00

**DAIRY CATTLE**

New Holland, PA. Price per animal.

<b>FRESH COWS</b>		
SUPREME	1300.00	1425.00
APPROVED	900.00	1300.00
MEDIUM	600.00	900.00
<b>SHORT BRED COWS (1-3 MONTHS):</b>		
APPROVED	800.00	1275.00
MEDIUM	425.00	725.00
<b>BRED COWS:</b>		
APPROVED	700.00	1050.00
MEDIUM	600.00	675.00
<b>SPRINGING COWS (7-9 MONTHS):</b>		
APPROVED	900.00	1175.00
MEDIUM	525.00	925.00
<b>SPRINGING HEIFERS (7-9 MONTHS):</b>		
APPROVED	600.00	975.00
MEDIUM	400.00	675.00
<b>BRED HEIFERS (4-6 MONTHS):</b>		
APPROVED	650.00	850.00
<b>SHORT BRED HEIFERS (1-3 MONTHS):</b>		
APPROVED, FEW	600.00	750.00
<b>OPEN HEIFERS</b>		
200-600 LBS		
APPROVED, FEW	350.00	375.00
MEDIUM, FEW	225.00	310.00
600-900 LBS		
APPROVED, FEW	475.00	485.00

(continued from Page 1)

While the cattle Christine's step-grandparents raised no longer reside on the farm, chickens and bees provide for the sale of eggs and honey. Recently the beehives had to be moved closer to the house where power was available to run an electric fence that deters bears.

"We had bears when I was a kid," said Christine. "Now the bears are back."

In 2017, the Whitneys upgraded the farm's irrigation system with assistance from a \$12,685 Farmland Restoration grant from DoAg.

Prior to installation of a new well and underground irrigation mainline, John and Christine used a 600-gallon water tank mounted on a trailer to move water to the back fields. They needed to refill and move the tank once or twice a day to provide enough water to their crops.

The Whitney's original plan to dredge and use a farm pond for irrigation was modified after consultation with DoAg and the NRCS, who suggested a well might be a better option for vegetable crops due to increasing produce safety requirements.

"It's nice working with these guys. They're very helpful and have great ideas," said Christine.

The new well has excellent yield and provides adequate water supply to the high tunnel as well as to the fields.



Christine Whitney removes row covers used to protect crops from freezing conditions in one of the high tunnels at Phoenix Farm.

DoAg's Farmland Restoration grants typically cover up to 50 percent of the cost associated with qualified farmland restoration activities. The maximum award per project is \$20,000.

The Whitneys leveraged DoAg's restoration funding with a separate NRCS EQIP grant that also supported a new gravel access road, enabling the Whitneys to receive 90 percent of the total cost for the irrigation.

"At first I was against it," John said about the new access road. But he changed his mind when NRCS explained the road would minimize erosion and protect the land. "It was well worth it."

The partnerships with local, state, and federal government have been valuable resources to the Whitneys, who strongly support partnering with their local community and fellow farmers as well.

In 1998, Christine's mother began leasing farmland to neighboring Kathy and Ben Caruso of Upper Forty Farm, who the Whitneys consider mentors and fellow stewards of the land. Ben, who recently passed away, and Kathy took the land through the three-year transition to organic, making it easier for Phoenix to get its own organic certification. John and Christine continue to lease three acres to Upper Forty. For the past few years the Whitneys have also leased land to Forest City Farms, which is another certified organic farm based out of Middletown.

"It's a nice community," said Christine, "You lend a helping hand when you need to."

The Whitneys also participate in the Organic Certification Cost Share Program administered by DoAg and funded through the USDA Farm Service Agency. The cost share program offers certified organic farmers and processors an annual 75 percent reimbursement for the cost of certification, up to \$750.

"Every bit helps," Christine says of the program when asked by fellow farmers if it's worth it.

(continued on Page 4)

## ADVERTISEMENTS

### FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut's first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or [www.bludon.com](http://www.bludon.com)

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or [www.bludon.com](http://www.bludon.com)

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal's Power Fence 860-491-2290.

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227.

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.

72-R. Round hay bales. Wrapped or unwrapped, first cutting. Picked up or delivered. 203-264-2217.

73-R. Pumpkins – Full selection gourds, munchkins, novelty pumpkins and squash, white, prizewinner, face, and sugar. By the bin or trailer loads. Good color, stems, and spray program. Picked fresh. Dzen Farms, 860-648-1355.

77-R. Nursery hoops for sale in Suffield, CT. 100's available in 3 sizes, 14'W x 6'H, 17' x 9', 20' x 9'. Call Paul for more details 860-668-7371.

80-R. Christmas greens: wreaths and roping, many sizes and varieties. Excellent for fundraisers. 203-457-1344.

84-R. Tunis ram – He's a proven breeder, approx. 250 lbs. Contact Jamie at 203-556-1833.

85-R. Round bale metal hay rack - \$50. Truck mount 8 HP leaf vacuum - \$125. 203-266-0722.

86-R. IH 2 row corn planter to fit IH-"H" tractor. Chains, sprockets, extra plates, etc. \$200. Call David 203-453-9865.

91-R. Farm for sale. 9.2 acre about 40,000 sq. ft. greenhouses in Eastford, CT. Used to produce lettuce, cucumbers, herbs, tomatoes. \$299,000. Negotiable. 860-336-8000.

92-R. Christmas Trees: Wholesale Fraser Fir and Balsam Fir. Excellent shape, color, spray program. Dzen Farms, 860-648-1355.

93-R. Border collie pups - \$800.00. Males, females. Black and white. Ready Nov. 1st. 203-263-4725, [eveningstardodd@charter.net](mailto:eveningstardodd@charter.net)

### WANTED

7-R. Livestock wanted: Dairy cattle, heifers of any age, beef cows, bulls, steers, feeder cattle, veal, groups of sheep and goats. [RyanM01@comcast.net](mailto:RyanM01@comcast.net) or 860-655-0958. If no answer, leave message. All calls returned.

87-R. Livestock trailer, any size or condition. Call Bruce 860-465-7543.

88-R. Seeking rear differential for an International truck, or entire International truck for parts. Call Bruce 860-465-7543.

### MISCELLANEOUS

89-R. Bulldozing in Eastern CT. Farm ponds up to 3 acres. Need farm water, call Don Kemp. Also, land clearing. 860-546-9500.

### AG JOB CONNECTION

82-R. Seeking farm manager for Green Acres Farm in Bristol, CT. Need experience with haying, handling and repairing farm equipment, property maintenance including snow plowing, and buying, selling, and managing small number of beef cows, and other farm related responsibilities. Resume and contact info should be sent to: Green Acres Farm, c/o Whit Betts, 1924 Perkins Street, Bristol, CT 06010. Tel: 860-681-1375.

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Christine and John Whitney of Phoenix Farm.

2018 was the third year Phoenix Farm offered a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program which had 35-members and ran for 20 weeks.

John takes time off from his off-farm job as an operations manager to run the farm stand while Christine attends the Wethersfield Farmers' Market on Thursdays during the market season. The farm also participates in the Cromwell Farmers' Market in the summer and the Coventry Winter Farmers' Market.

Christine has made the transition to working full-time on the farm. Their daughter Danielle, who recently bought the house adjacent to the farm, works on the farm part-time. Their daughter Catherine, who lives in Middlefield, also provides weekly assistance as her schedule allows.

The Whitneys continue to seek partnership opportunities as they

work to further grow Phoenix Farm. Currently under construction is a movable high tunnel on a 200-foot track, which will provide better environmental controls over various crops as they progress. Also planned are pollinator habitat around the edges of fields, and a lean-to for housing the farm implements.

From farmland that had fallen out of production and seemed doomed to a future other than agriculture to a thriving diversified organic farm feeding and serving the local community and beyond, Phoenix has overcome challenges and built partnerships that have enabled it to flourish and plan for a bright future.

"That's where our name came from," explained Christine. "We are Phoenix Farm because the farm was reborn."

### HARVEST NEW ENGLAND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW SEEKS EXHIBITORS

The biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show will return to Sturbridge, MA, February 27-28, 2019. The deadline for early trade show registration is Friday, November 30, 2018.

Organizers are seeking exhibitors for the upcoming event which is sponsored by New England State Departments of Agriculture, in cooperation with agricultural organizations across the region. More than 800 people attended the conference in March 2017, which provided exhibitor the opportunity showcase their products and services to farmers in New England.

This unique marketing conference targets New England growers interested in learning new marketing ideas or fine-tuning strategies for business success.

There will be multiple educational and networking opportunities. The conference schedule will allow specific times for attendees to visit the trade show to maximize exposure to exhibitors. For additional information and to register online visit [www.harvestnewengland.org](http://www.harvestnewengland.org).

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**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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